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Arts Organizations and Their Impact on Adverse Childhood Experiences

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Abstract:

The following three questions will be examined through this study. First, what role do arts organizations play in relation to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)? Second, do art organizations make any impact on individuals who have experienced ACEs? Third, do these organizations create this impact knowingly or unknowingly? Through examining six organizations it appears that arts organizations serve as efficient supplemental tools in helping individuals suffering from side effects of ACEs. By combining organizational efforts around mental health, rehabilitation, and social work with those of arts organizations, individuals are able to find a pathway or alternative communication method to expressing their emotions, fears, and *demons* that they have been trying to keep hidden. The research has also shown that art organizations are helping people confronting ACEs without knowing that the programming is indeed helping individuals facing ACEs. Through examining these questions the recommendation from this paper is for mental health, rehabilitation, and social work organizations to acknowledge how useful the arts can be for their patients and clients, and to seek out collaborations with these organizations.

Keywords: art, art organization, adverse childhood experience, ACE, mental health, rehabilitation, social work, trauma, programming, capacity, collaboration, communication

Introduction:

> *So Matilda's strong young mind continued to grow, nurtured by the voice of all those authors who had sent their books out into the world like ships on the sea. These books gave Matilda a hopeful and comforting message: You are not alone.*
>
> \- Roald Dahl, 1988

Under certain undesirable circumstances individuals can experience events in childhood that in turn affect them immediately or later in life. Some negative events that occur in the first eighteen years of life are called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs are stressful or traumatic events in the life of a child. These include events such as: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, witnessing the mother being treated violently, household mental illness, incarcerated household member, and parental separation or divorce (SAMHSA, 2016). Such experiences are not only stressful or traumatic they also can lead to less than desirable futures. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ACEs are very common. Many individuals have suffered from more than one ACE, and a larger amount of ACEs typically lead to health problems, such as mental health issues and drug addictions (SAMHSA, 2016). As one study found in *BMC Public Health*: "Childhood stressors are known to produce changes in the developing brain that affect emotions, behavior, and cognition which in turn can impair health and quality of life via numerous pathways" (Anda, Brown, Felitti, Dube, & Giles, 2008, p. 8).

On December 6th 2016, a conference was held at Boynton Health at the University of Minnesota called "ACEs and Mental Health: Broadening the Conversation." This conference focused on how ACEs affect the brain and life of an individual. Additionally, the conference discussed how higher education can help students who have experienced ACEs not only cope

with their traumatic experiences but stop the cycle of ACEs from continuing. Like many higher education institutions, arts organizations seek to fulfill a mission and serve their designated communities. How then do arts organizations fit into the ACE conversation? Many arts organizations, such as Roots of Music Inc and Kulture Klub Collaborative, currently serve youth who are facing ACEs like homelessness and neglect. How then do arts organizations knowingly help individuals deal with ACEs? Or, are they unknowingly serving individuals dealing with ACEs? Can they help youth and adults cope or overcome ACEs? Can arts organizations stop ACEs from occurring in the future? By addressing these questions this paper hopes to illustrate that arts organizations are already ahead of higher education institutions in helping individuals with ACEs, even if they are not utilizing the term ACE. Their programming can provide effective ways to help individuals cope and overcome their trauma, potentially stopping cyclical behavioral patterns from occurring.

Literature Review:

While researching the topic of ACEs in relation to nonprofit arts organizations, there were few articles written connecting the two. Much of the literature addresses ACEs in relation to mental health and drug abuse. The literature also analyzed how helpful art therapy and art can be while helping an individual confront their ACEs. In addition, there was literature on the cyclical nature that occurs from experiencing an ACE. The following review will break the literature up into the following sections: mental health, drug use, cyclical behavior, and art and art therapy.

Mental Health

Anda et al (2008), affiliates of the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Bailey (2007), a drama councilor and therapist, are both in agreement that ACEs can cause changes in the brain that can alter the behavior of an individual. Bailey discusses the behaviors of sexual abuse survivors as "a direct result of the biological changes that have occurred in their brains in response to their traumatic experience (p. 59)." These changes can range from refusal to speak about their experiences, the inability to create strong relationships, and reckless behavior. In a broader perspective on how ACEs effect youth, Isohookana et al (2013), affiliates of the University of Oulu and Helsinki University Central Hospital, state that "ACEs might... be related to the risk-taking behavior, which exposes adolescents to accidents and death" (p. 19). ACEs in turn have the ability to "produce changes in the developing brain that affect emotions, behavior, and cognition… which in turn can impair health and quality of life via numerous pathways." (Anda, et al, 2008, p. 8).

There is a consensus amongst the literature that experiencing an ACE increases the risk of mental health issues. As Anda et al (2008) state, "Childhood abuse has been associated with subsequent development of posttraumatic stress disorder... borderline personality disorder, dissociative symptoms, and depression" (p. 217-218). In relation to this there has been research-connecting ACEs to higher suicide rates. Isohookana et al (2013) found that "adolescents who had been exposed to sexual abuse before the age of 16 years had… a 2.7-fold likelihood for suicide attempt compared to adolescents without sexual abuse" (p.18). They also found that the amount of ACEs experienced also made the likelihood of attempted suicide increase more than eightfold. In addition, a study completed by Lipschitz, Winegar, Nicolaou, Hartnick, Michele,

and Southwick in New York City (1999) showed "that 3 % of the 12- to 18-year-old psychiatric hospital-treated adolescents had been exposed to sexual abuse and 44 % to physical abuse" (as quoted by Isohookana et al, 2013, p. 13).

These experiences do not just have the potential to immediately affect youth, but can affect an individual years after a traumatic experience. In the study of Anda et al (2008), where the median age was 57, they found a "positive association of the ACE score with recent depressive symptoms suggests the consequences of ACEs persist for several decades after their occurrence" (p. 223). There are also articles that show an association between the amount of ACEs experienced and the increase between mental health issues later in life. Isohookana et al (2013) found that "three experienced ACEs were shown to increase the risk of attempted suicide in childhood or adolescence more than eightfold; the risk remained more than threefold in adulthood compared to those who did not have any ACEs" (p.14). Researchers, who addressed the longevity of the negative effects of ACEs, discussed the problematic nature of studying survivors as adults. This is because the accuracy of their answers can vary due to the time between the study and the initial experience. Researchers also questioned the right time to intervene, or study survivors.

In addition, literature found differences between how men and women react to ACEs. A majority of the literature pointed towards women being affected by ACEs more drastically than men. Anda et al (2008) found that there was 10% prevalence in depression with women than men, and about 5% more likelihood that women will experience three or more ACEs in their lifetime (p. 220). Isohookana et al (2013) found that women who have been exposed to sexual abuse increased the risk of self-harm and suicide attempts (p. 13). Women were also found to be more likely to develop PTSD than men and were more likely to seek help via psychiatric help.

Isohookana et al (2013) found that men suffered from conduct disorders and "came to acute psychiatric care from divorced families and they suffered from parental unemployment and parental death more often than girls" (p. 19). They also found that there were differences among genders outside of the United States. In the United States sexual abuse is more prominent with women, but "in China, boys suffer more often from sexual abuse than girls" (p. 18). This could mean that ACEs affect genders differently in countries throughout the world.

Drug Use

Mental health issues are not the only consequence of experiencing ACEs. Literature found that individuals with ACEs have a greater tendency towards drug use. There is an increase in use of both prescription and recreational drugs. Anda et al (2008) pointed out that in previous research ACEs are shown to be "associated with … health risks such as smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use... Thus, ACEs may 'accelerate' the onset of health risks and illnesses, in the process increasing the use of prescription drugs among younger persons (p. 5)." Similarly to mental health issues, as the number of ACEs increase the number of prescription drugs also in increase. This is similar for recreational drug and substance abuse. As Bailey (2007) stated, "About one-third of traumatized people eventually turn to alcohol or drugs to relieve themselves from the emotional symptoms caused by their trauma" (p. 61). The dependency on substances continues as an individual ages as well. Anda et al (2008) found "ACEs substantially increase the number of prescriptions and classes of drugs used for as long as 7 to 8 decades after their occurrence" (p. 1).

Cyclical Behavior

It is not uncommon to find children repeating similar behavioral patterns as their parents. Smith, Hart, Blane, and Hole (1998), affiliates of University of Bristol, University of Glasgow, Imperial College of Science, and Ruchill Hospital, point out "Men whose fathers had manual occupations when they were children were more likely as adults to have manual jobs and be living in deprived areas" (p. 1631). Similarly, there was cyclical behavior found among individuals who have lived through ACEs. This essentially means that an individual who has lived through an ACE has the possibility of causing their children to experience the same or similar ACE. Craig, Baglivio, Wolff, Piquero, and Epps (2017), affiliates of the University of North Texas, 2G4S Youth Services, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and University of Texas- Dallas, found that ACEs increase the chance for an individual to experience negative consequences such as, "chronic disease, unemployment, and involvement in serious, violent, and chronic offending" (p. 3). Anda et al (2008) found that ACEs can also lead to lower education and higher unemployment. In addition, individuals who have experienced ACEs were found to have "a higher prevalence of risk-taking behaviors such as having 50 or more sexual partners, smoking, recent violence, having spent at least one night in jail in the last 12 months, and drinking heavily" (Craig, et al, 2017, p. 4). There are also trends pointing towards ACEs leading to a higher rate of incarceration. Craig et al "found that among justice system-involved youth, those with exposure to more of these adverse and negative events are more likely to be classified as higher risk to reoffend and engage in serious, chronic offending patterns than their counterparts with lower ACE scores" (p. 4).

There was research that showed how having an incarcerated parent could cause ACEs to continue. In 2009, through the Wilder Foundation, Volunteers of America conducted research

on the implications of families impacted by incarceration (Meyerson & Otteson, 2009). They found that youth who have an incarcerated parent will experience adverse experiences, and at the minimum they will experience financial instability. Volunteers of America (2009) also found that having an incarcerated parent can lead to negative outcomes relating to communication skills, behavior, and emotional stability.

Due to the need for society to protect children a *conspiracy of silence* has been created according to Meyerson and Otteson (2009). This conspiracy of silence relates to caregivers of children of prisoners avoiding or refusing to talk about the incarcerated parents actions or why they are absent. This absence of honesty and discussion can lead to children being more anxious and fearful and unable to cope with adverse experiences. "This stifling of communication and repression of the realities and struggles that a family faces can lead to strained social relationships throughout a child's life" (p. 5).

Meyerson and Otteson (2009), with the Wilder Foundation, found that the school performance of children can suffer, and the lack of communication "increases the likelihood of experiencing poverty, instability and reduced access to sources of support" (p. 5). Children may experience social exclusion consisting of "pre-existing deprivation, loss of material and social capital following imprisonment, stigma, and diminished future prospects" (p.5). The incarceration of their parent may lead to future actions or behaviors that are considered high-risk. These may include "externalized behaviors including anger, aggression, and hostility to caregivers and siblings, to drop out of high school and to engage in delinquent behavior such as lying, cheating, and stealing" (p.5). This can result in difficulty or inability to create long term, healthy and meaningful relationships.

In addition, the research found that children could be more affected by the mother being incarcerated than the father. Meyerson and Otteson (2009) found that, "8-10 percent of children with an incarcerated parent have lost their mother to the corrections system" (p. 5) and these mothers are likely to suffer from mental health issues. In addition, incarcerated mothers are more likely to have experienced ACEs. As pointed out the incarcerated mothers are "more likely to be drug users, live in poverty, and to be victims of physical or sexual abuse" (p.6). This in turn presents the issue of the children witnessing these behaviors of the mother. Not only do the children experience household disruption caused by the mother being detained, they also experience the instability created by the actions of the mother. Meyerson and Otteson also point out that this leads to further disruption of the physical and mental stability of the child.

> When a father goes to prison, children are likely to remain in the custody and home of their mother; when a mother is incarcerated, children are much more likely to be transferred to the care of a non-parental caregiver, most often a grandparent. In fact, less than 10 percent of children of incarcerated mothers are in foster care (2009, p. 6).

In addition, there was research conducted on whether a positive influence later in life can change the behavior of an individual who has experienced ACEs. This study, completed by Craig et al, showed that "those with weaker social bonds have significantly more ACEs than those with stronger social bonds" (Craig, et al, 2017, p. 11). However, when implementing a positive influence in the life of an individual it was found that there was not much difference for an individual who has experienced ACEs and grown into adulthood. Craig et al found that it is important to intervene "with these individuals early in life in order to not only improve their future health and life outcomes but also decrease delinquent or criminal behavior" (p.15). This does not just mean creating positive influences, but actually intervening in the life of the individual.

Art and Art Therapy

When exploring the connection between ACEs and art organizations, much of the literature discusses Art Therapy. St. Thomas and Johnson (2007), a psychotherapist and art therapist, and a social worker, discuss how, "Play and art therapy have been shown to provide the traumatized child with the opportunity to restructure traumatic events to provide them with meaning, to gain control over such events, and to gain a sense of control or psychological safety" (p. 69). Bailey (2007) continues to discuss this idea of art creating a feeling of safety from traumatic experiences as it distances the individual from the intense emotions that come from their experiences. Bailey also discusses how "Humans are narrative-making creatures and we cannot integrate an experience into our mental schema and emotional make-up until we can make sense of it for ourselves within a worded story of our life" (p. 61). This allows a level of control over an otherwise uncontrollable situation.

Art allows the individual an opportunity to gain control and clarity of their experiences, and it gives insight to those trying to help them. According to St Thomas and Johnson (2007) the art of children are documentation of not only their childhood, but also they can be symbolic references to what is happening around them and to them. They add, "Artistic expression can be a metaphorical message translated into tangible physical terms: The child translates images and feelings into movements of shapes and colors in a shared experience with the facilitator" (p. 70). This even continues into adulthood, though slightly skewed by time, Bennett (2005) states:

> Many of these trauma-related pieces, in fact, incorporated fictional or fantasy elements, even when the artist might lay claim to expressing an affective truth. Insofar as they could be deemed to promote understanding of trauma, their contribution tended to lie in the endeavor to find a communicable language of sensation and affect with which to register something of the experience of traumatic memory—and, thus, in a manner of formal innovation (p. 2).

St. Thomas and Johnson (2007) highlights that many people, including children and adults turn, "to art, poetry, and philosophy as a means of both recording their plight and retaining their humanity" (p. 74). This shows how it is healthy for individuals to rely on artistic expression in order to cope with negative circumstances. Though it is a helpful tool, there are large problems when it comes to art therapy. First, as St. Thomas and Johnson (2007) found, "Art therapy derives from a specific set of cultural assumptions, values, and constructions that are uniquely Euro-American in origin" (p. 70). Second, it is not always accessible to everyone financially, location wise, or to their understanding of art and culture.

Methodology:

Previous literature and studies have shown that ACEs lead to negative circumstances for individuals, and are something that should be confronted. After looking further into what literature had to say about the relationship of the arts to ACEs, there appeared to be a definite benefit to including art when helping people deal with traumatic experiences. However, there appeared to be a gap in how far art therapy can go in helping an individual who is dealing with ACEs, as it is not always accessible. This leaves an opening for nonprofit arts organizations to step in. These organizations are able to create accessible programming that utilizes art as a tool to help individuals deal or cope with their *demons*. In order to look deeper into how arts nonprofits can help individuals who have experienced ACEs this study looks in depth at six different organizations that utilize arts programming.

Given my positionality as a single queer female who has no children, why is this topic personally important? Though the only ACEs I was exposed to as a child were the ones found in Roald Dahl novels such as Matilda, I did grow up to hear about experiences my maternal

grandmother endured. My grandmother, Lucille Klaers, went through multiple ACEs during her childhood. Her father was an alcoholic who used to leave her in the car while he would drink in bars. Her mother went through a severe mental breakdown after losing her third child. A brother who was an active member of a gang also surrounded her during her adolescence. These details are just the beginning of a tumultuous childhood that led to an ongoing battle with depression and addiction. My Grandmother did seek help and was saved by art. In the later part of her life she threw herself into her art.

The case studies that will be examined vary in size, location, and mission. The common denominator with the six organizations is that they utilize arts programming, and they work directly with individuals who have experienced an ACE. The six organizations that will be examined are Roots of Music Inc, Mellwood House, Ifetayo Cultual Arts, the Judy Dworin Performance Project, Kulture Klub Collaborative, and Minneapolis American Indian Center. Mellwood House and Minneapolis American Indian Center work directly with individuals in rehabilitation or in drug use prevention. Ifetayo Cultural Arts works with both students and parents who are dealing with mental health issues and parental separation The Judy Dworin Performance Project work with youth exposed to living with individuals who have been incarcerated in the past. Roots of Music Inc work with students who are living in low-income and high-risk neighborhoods and Kulture Klub works with homeless youth.

The original method for this paper was a mix of case studies and in-person or phone interviews. Due to time constraints, this changed to only case studies using published work and Internet resources. Six organizations were chosen for the sake of clarity. The organizations were chosen based on three factors. First, the organizations are based in the United States of America, and in different locations. Second, each organization serves a different community.

Third, the organizations all work with an experience that is labeled an adverse childhood experience. These organizations were found through recommendations from colleagues, and web searches via Guidestar and Google.

Case Studies:

Roots of Music Inc

Roots of Music Inc is a nonprofit arts organization that provides free music education in New Orleans, LA. Their mission is to "Preserve and promote the great musical heritage of New Orleans by providing free music education, academic tutoring and mentoring to under resourced youth aged 9-14 from across Orleans Parish" (Roots of Music Inc, 2014). Though they do not use the language Adverse Childhood Experience or ACE, they serve youth who are "widely considered 'at risk' by any discernible definition" (Dennis, 2013). Roots of Music Inc provides instrumental instruction, music history classes, and music theory classes. In addition they also provide students with hot meals, academic tutoring, and transportation.

Roots of Music Inc have five program objectives (Roots of Music Inc, 2017). First, they are looking to keep children off the street. Second the organization wants to unite students from different areas of New Orleans. Third, Roots of Music Inc seek to support economic development efforts in New Orleans. Fourth and fifth, the organization wishes to develop talent and create a nationally recognized marching band.

The organization measures their success in seven different ways (Roots of Music Inc). First and second, they look at the number of students enrolled, and their retention rates. Third, they look at the total hours of instruction with a musical instrument. Fourth, Roots of Music Incmonitors the participation of the students in lessons, outreach and competitions. Fifth, they

monitor the skill level and growth of their students. Sixth and seventh, Roots of Music Inc look at the GPA and graduation rate of their students.

Within a year Roots of Music Inc provided "Over 2,500 hours of music education and other academic tutoring, over 30,400 nutritious hot meals, 1,400 bus journeys, and supplies over 150 instruments for student use" (Roots of Music Inc). How does an organization achieve this? In order to get students to the Cabildo location, they send out four buses around the city to pick up 140 students (Dennis, 2013). Instead of beginning their nights with music lessons they begin with homework and Academic tutoring by students from Tulane and Xavier Universities. As founder Derrik Tabb states "I think it's stupid for kids to have to do homework after band practice… If kids get to work on their homework right after school and before practice they can stay fresh on their grades" (Dennis, 2013). In addition to the academic tutoring all students of Roots of Music Inc must maintain a 2.5 GPA or higher to remain in the program. Roots of Music Inc has the ability to provide their programming and services thanks to financial and in-kind donations from Second Harvest, Zildjian, Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, StubHub, and NOLA Mororsports (Dennis, 2013).

Mellwood House

Mellwood House was a nonprofit drug and alcohol rehabilitation program in the Washington D.C. area that was a part of Second Genesis Inc. The facility focused on treatment for women addicts and their children (Brooke, 2009). In *The Use of the Creative Therapies with Sexual Abuse Survivors* (2007) and *The Use of the Creative Therapies with Chemical Dependency Issues* (2009), Sally Bailey discusses two important experiences she had as a substance abuse counselor at Mellwood House. Both of these experiences show how the use of

art, in these experiences creating plaster of Paris masks, can help someone confront their negatives experiences. Bailey explains that, "Art was often a very effective intervention because it preempted the verbal rationalizing that addicts so skillfully use as a defense mechanism by funneling their ideas into non-verbal images first" (as quoted in Brooke, 2009, p. 210). The use of the masks at Mellwood House was to help groups of women depict the mask or behaviors they live behind to hide their pain or weaknesses. The women would then "Write down what the outside of the mask said and what the inside said in whatever form the words came to him/her" (Brooke, 2009, p. 210). This included the individual writing a poem, story, or monologue.

The first experience was with a client named Gena who was in a residential treatment program, which consisted of three phases (Bailey, 2007). Phase one was acknowledging a need for change, phase two was recovery and relapse prevention, and phase three was re-entry to society. This particular client had a hard time saying no to anything, which had led her to be used and abandoned by other people. Bailey goes on to describe this as "people pleasing" explains that it "is a survival behavior that develops in chemically dependent and abusive families" (p. 67). Gena who was in her last week at Melwood House came to Bailey and explained she was not ready to leave yet. However she was unable to explain why, so Bailey had her draw how she felt. Gena then drew what she described as an "explosive mine" which led to Gena opening up about being a victim of incest as a teenager.

> Suddenly she was telling me the story about how her mother and father had died when was about eleven and she had to go live with her grandmother and grandfather. A year or so later her grandmother died. Her grandfather started 'using her for his sexual needs.' And her uncle who lived with them found out. Instead of rescuing her, he demanded that his father share her with him. She seriously considered running away, but she did not know how she would survive on her own, so she stayed. And began hating herself. And doing drugs to numb the pain (p. 67).

Gena was later able to use art to communicate what she was feeling, instead of relying on speaking about what had happened to her. "Outside/inside metaphor helped her express the conflict between her feeling and her behavior" (Bailey, 2007, p. 68). One piece she created was a plaster of Paris life mask, which depicted the conflict between what she was really feeling with what she was communicating. The outside of the mask depicted love and the inside depicted heartbreak, prison, and the word No.

The second experience was with a client named Althea (Brooke, 2009). Althea was an angry individual who did not want to be told what to do. Through working with Bailey she was able to overcome her anger and accept her need for change. This is when she created her own plaster of Paris mask. The outside of her mask depicted the behavior of a bully. Althea "devised she needed to memorialize that behavior, so she would never forget her addiction and, consequently, never go back to it" (as quoted in Brooke, 2009, p. 211)." When she put down in words what the outside of the mask meant to her, Althea said through the following poem:

> Anger is my name.
> Bullying is my game,
> Don't put me in a corner,
> For I will spit fire.
> I don't care what you think,
> Because I just want to get higher.
> If you look into my eyes,
> They will lead you the wrong way
> Because I don't give a fuck
> What you may say.
> So if my game don't make you jump
> Ill just move on until u find another punk
> "I DON'T NEED YOU!!" (p. 211)

The inside of the mask of Althea was title *The Real Me*, and she wrote the following poem to correspond:

> I have this huge concern about being neglected.

I am afraid you won't like me or just care for me the way I like.
I am scared you will use me and my body
Say you love me, but you don't really care.
This side of me I am very happy, very affectionate, and soft,
Very giving, loving, and caring
I love to laugh and feel secure,
But am afraid of being abused.
I am very vulnerable and will believe your words,
Because I long for me dreams—
A dream that may never come true.
So please don't lie to me.
I would appreciate it you just let me be. (p. 211)

Ifetayo Cultural Arts

Ifetayo Cultural Arts is a twenty eight year old organization In New York City, NY that is "Dedicated to supporting the creative, education and vocational development of youth and families of African descent in Flatbush, Brooklyn and surrounding communities" (Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy). Their programming ranges from performing and visual arts courses to personal skills and community development courses. Ifetayo Cultural Arts also provides public performances and social services "either directly or through referrals to strategic partners" (Ifetayo Cultural Arts Academy). The organization has been so effective that is was recognized and received an award in 2013 from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (Superville, 2013). The organization inspires students and their families to be leaders in their communities by developing their potential. Ifetayo Cultural Arts also encourages students and their families to work together in order to strengthen their community. "The theoretical underpinnings and organizational praxis of Ifetayo reflect an African-centered (albeit syncretic) model of community development that places art and culture at the strategic center" (Archer-Cunningham, 2007, p. 27).

Ifetayo Cultural Arts had one particular student, a young girl, who was negatively affected by the fighting of her estranged parents. The young girl was "contemplating suicide because of the hostility between her parents" (Archer-Cunningham, 2007, p. 27) and was able to overcome her depression through the dance and creative writing experiences that were provided to her by Ifetayo Cultural Arts.

Ifetayo Cultural Arts was also able to assist the parents of the girl. The father, who was an active parent in the life of his daughter, "Was asked to participate in a parent workshop that was designed to mirror the artistic experiences his daughter was having" (p. 27). Through the program, the father was able to find a safe and supportive community that helped him increase his confidence. This resulted in the parents of the girl interacting respectfully "after more than eleven years of estrangement" (p. 27).

Judy Dworin Performance Project

The Judy Dworin Performance Project, founded in 1989 in Hartford, CT, is a nonprofit arts organization that utilizes "Professional artists who—on stage, in school, in prisons and the community – innovate, inspire, educate and collaborate" (JDPP). One program they offer is called Bridging Boundaries. This program, which began in 2005, "Uses arts intervention coupled with social work, to bridge the forced separations of populations affected by incarceration (JDPP). The program is open to women at the York Correctional Institution, their children, and children in the Greater Hartford area who have incarcerated parents.

The Judy Dworin Performance Project has conducted outreach for incarcerated women and has been able to help reconnect families. The organization has helped children reconnect with their mothers, parents reconnect with their incarcerated children, and children of

incarcerated parents connect with other children of incarcerated individuals (JDPP). Through art these families have found new common ground and an alternative way to communicate. As quoted by the Judy Dworin Performance Project, Former York Christian Institute Deputy Warden Karen Oien observes about the work of JDPP, "Lines of communication are opened through the arts that cannot be done anywhere else" (JDPP). This program was even expanded into a weekend residency program, making the program even more accessible. One encounter during this program was with an incarcerated woman named Debbie and her daughters Sami and Suzi (Trinity College). Sami had just been in a performance of *Time In* at the Charter Oak Cultural Center and came to visit her mother shortly after. Debbie recollected,

> It was a moment I will forever cherish. Reaching across the table, she took my hand, looked me in the eye and said, 'Mom, I am so very proud of you'. And with those words, I knew I had finally done something right. Something I, too, could be proud of (Trinity College).

The part of Bridging Boundaries that has been created for youth with incarcerated parents is a way to introduce children to other children in similar family related circumstances. This is very beneficial for the children as "they hide this reality from classmates and friends, for fear of the attached stigmas" (JDPP). The program takes place weekly and monthly throughout the school year in school and after school in collaboration with Families in Crisis and the on-site school social workers (JDPP). Dworin explains this program as a way to "introduce the arts as a vehicle for self-expression to these young people to help them begin to feel comfortable expressing the fact that they have a parent in prison, something that most have difficulty sharing" (Trinity College),

Kulture Klub Collaborative

Kulture Klub Collaborative provides "Engaging art and artistic practice to provide enriching multidisciplinary opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness" (Kulture Klub). The Minneapolis, MN nonprofit has brought artists and homeless youth together through workshops, open mic nights, artist residencies and art outings. In doing this, homeless youth are able to gain self-esteem and respect as they enter adulthood. "Kulture Klub not only helps make sure at-risk youth have access to resources to meet their most basic needs, but it also goes beyond they basics; KKC connects young people to the arts and artists and further supports their ongoing development of their artistic dream (Vang 2017)."

Kulture Klub currently provides three programs ArtView, Artist-in-Residencies, and ArtLab. These three programs range from short events to more committed time consuming month-long projects. ArtView is a program that bring homeless youth to weekly art and cultural events around the Twin Cities and neighboring cities. These events include "Performances at the Walker Art Center or a tour to Franconia Sculpture Park" (Kulture Klub). The Artist-in Residencies program partners youth up with professional artists. These intensive workshops range in time and in discipline. The third program is the ArtLab program, which is an event held either at the Kulture Klub or at a studio of an artist. These artist-led sessions include "open mics, outing to Fraconia sculpture Park work with Art on Wheels, and join with homeless youth shelters to conduct other Art Events throughout the year" (Kulture Klub).

Through collaboration Kulture Klub has been able to reach out to youth such as Allison Wesley and Corey Blevins who were homeless at the ages of 14 and 16 respectively (Moody, 2013). This forced both individuals to grow up fast and learn how to survive on their own. Through collaboration between YouthLink, which is a Minneapolis based nonprofit that works

with homeless youth, and Kulture Klub Collaborative they were able to become more involved in the arts. In 2013 they created a series of portraits. Blevins stated of her portrait "This portrait would explain the boldness in me… The lion in me (2013)." Through Kulture Klub Collaborative homeless youth are able to express themselves in diverse ways such as their own newspapers, magazines, and musical recordings. As participant Allison Wesley (2013) states, "It's somewhere you can just go and do what normal people do. Go to plays, hangout write poetry, take pictures" (2013).

Minneapolis American Indian Center

The Prevention through Cultural Awareness Program at the Minneapolis American Indian Center has the goal of reducing "Substance abuse among at-risk urban American Indian youth by promoting protective factors through experiential experiences that both challenges the youth, and helps reconnect them to their culture" (MAIC). The program, located in Minneapolis, MN, was specifically started for youth whose parents, guardians, or family has a history of substance abuse. Families are also encouraged to participate in the program. The program is made for American Indian youth ages 8 to 18 that have not had a Rule 25 assessment (MAIC). Rule 25 Assessment is a chemical use assessment conducted in order to receive public funding for chemical dependency treatment (MOFAS). The services that are provided are as follows: cultural specific program, cultural activities and Teachings, ATOD Education, Cultural Field Trips, Monthly Family Fun Night, Weekly Drum Group, Quarterly Mini Powwow, Weekly Dakota Language Table, and Weekly Ojibwe Language Table. The Minneapolis American Indian Center also offers a family fun night that is free to students and accompanying parents. These events include activities like a movie, an art project, cooking demonstration, some

physical fun and Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs Education through Art and Culture (MAIC, 2017).

Findings:

Out of the six organization examined, Roots of Music, Mellwood House, Ifetayo Cultual Arts, the Judy Dworin Performance Project, Kulture Klub Collaborative, and Minneapolis American Indian Center, none of them utilized the language Adverse Childhood Experience or ACE. However, all six work with youth who experience or have experienced them. In general each organization specifies one issue, such as homelessness or addiction, and as a result help with more than just one ACE. An example can be found at Mellwood House where Bailey (2007) was able to help her client Gena with both her addiction and trauma from the sexual abuse she previously faced.

While utilizing a mix of art with therapy, education, social work, or simply human connection the organizations are able to effectively help individuals cope with their negative experiences. Roots of Music Inc combines instrumental, music history, and music theory instruction with academic tutoring, transportation, and hot meals. Mellwood House utilizes art and therapy as a way to help female addicts overcome their demons. Ifetayo Cultural Arts provides a mix of performing, visual arts, personal skills, and community development courses to assist their stakeholders. Judy Dworin Performance Project utilizes a combination of arts intervention and social work to help incarcerated women and their children reconnect or stay connected. Kulture Klub Collaborative uses art and multidisciplinary opportunities to help homeless youth. The Minneapolis American Indian Center combines art, cultural enrichment, and education of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in order to help youth in their community.

All six of these organizations have shown that combining art with other methods can be very helpful when working with individuals experiencing ACEs.

Each organization also has a specified community and area in the United States of America that they work with. Roots of Music Inc serves youth between the ages of nine and fourteen from across New Orleans, LA area. Mellwood House helped female addicts from the Washington D.C. Area. Ifetayo Cultural serves New York City based families of African descent, specifically in the Flatbush and Brooklyn neighborhoods. The Judy Dworin Performance Project was made for incarcerated women who are located at the York Correctional Institution, their children, and children of incarcerated individuals in the Hartford, Connecticut area. Kulture Klub Collaborative is for homeless youth in the Minneapolis and Saint Paul area. The Minneapolis American Indian Center was created for Native American youth between the ages of eight and eighteen who have a family history of substance abuse.

There is a consensus among the organizations that through art individuals are able to communicate feelings and thoughts they are unable to verbally express. The Judy Dworin Performance Project allows the opportunity for children of incarcerated individuals to come together and express their feeling regarding their separation from their parents and the stigma surrounding the incarceration of their parents. Ifetayo Cultural Arts similarly allows young individuals to discuses their frustrations and feeling through dance. In addition, the organization allows parents to meet with other parents who are in similar situations and have similar backgrounds to communicate their frustrations. Mellwood House also allows for patients to communicate feelings and experiences through art that they are ashamed of or have buried for so many years.

Discussion and Recommendations:

It is clear from the case studies that arts organizations and their programming is utilized to help individuals who are facing or have faced ACEs. What also appears to be a trend throughout the six organizations is that they do not use the language ACE or adverse childhood experiences while discussing their work. The organizations also point towards programming that is effectively helping these individuals either cope or overcome their traumatic experiences. Though not all of the organizations discuss cyclical behaviors, some point towards this issue by incorporating parents in the programming. Ifetayo Cultural Arts and Judy Dworin Performance Project work with parents and their children who are facing an ACE. What was interesting is that they do not just identify the issues that the child is facing, but also look at the underlying issues the parents may be confronting.

There were two limitations that arose during research for this study. The first was the lack of literature connecting nonprofit arts organizations to ACEs. The second was not having time to interview individuals who work with ACEs and work for arts organizations that help with ACEs. Since there was so little written about arts organizations helping directly with ACEs it would have been helpful to speak with people who are working to help those who have experienced them. This also creates a gap while deciphering whether the staff of these organizations has the term ACE or adverse childhood experience on their radar. Just because they do not use the language on their websites, or in the press does not mean that the professionals are not aware of the term.

Through examining the literature it is clear that ACEs are a serious issue that can affect individuals during their childhood and adulthood. These experiences can hurt the mental and physical health of an individual. Additionally ACEs can hinder the potential and future of individuals. Through analyzing literature and organizations that connects ACEs and art, it appears that art can have a successful and helpful affect on traumatic experiences. Due to this the recommendation from this paper would be for mental health, rehabilitation centers, and social work organizations to acknowledge how useful the arts have been and can be for their patients and clients. These groups should also seek out relationships with arts organizations in order to collaborate with them and help them assess their impacts and effectiveness.

There are four reasons for the recommendation of mental health, rehabilitation centers, and social work organizations collaborating with arts organizations. The first benefit of collaboration would be the help offered to patients and clients. As the literature and case studies have shown art allows individuals a new way to communicate their thought and emotions without having to actually say it. The second benefit related to expanding capacity for mental health, rehabilitation centers, and social work organizations and as well as for arts organizations. Each organization has the ability to provide certain services, such as therapy and legal services, which reach different communities and people of different cultural backgrounds. Art programming may not be a service mental health, rehabilitation, and social work organizations cannot supply, or have the capacity for. Similarly arts organizations may not have the ability to provide what mental health, rehabilitation centers, and social work organizations are able to provide. In addition, finding individuals who have qualifications and education needed to properly provide help with mental health, addiction, and other ACEs may be a challenge for many arts organizations. The third benefit would be financial. Not only would collaboration

allow organizations to save money in areas they simply cannot afford, it also opens the door to potential new funding sources. Fourth, it will allow organizations to collect more research and data on ACEs and how art programming impacts them.

The next steps in accomplishing this collaboration successfully would be to talk with professionals who work with ACEs and arts organizations. There should also be research conducted to see if mental health, rehabilitation centers, and social work organizations are already collaborating with arts organizations. In addition to this the logistics on how these collaborations are carried out should be examined in order to ensure that all parties included have their expectations and intentions clarified and made transparent.

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